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New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Agenda item 60 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/58/L.5)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held its debate on this agenda item, together with agenda item 10, at the 23rd to 27th plenary meetings on 6, 7 and 9 October 2003. In connection with this item, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/58/L.5.

I give the floor to the representative of China to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.5.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.5, entitled "Enhancing capacity-building in global public health", under agenda item 60.

To halt and to begin to reverse, by 2015, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases is one of the development goals set down in the Millennium Declaration. To achieve such a goal, the international community needs to pay greater attention to capacity-building in global public health. The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in certain countries and regions in the first half of the year once again demonstrated that public health has become a global issue, which requires global cooperation. Only by enhancing the capacity of the international community to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases and by boosting national capacity-building in public health can there be a solid basis for development and prosperity in all countries. With that in mind, the Chinese delegation has taken the initiative of submitting the draft resolution entitled "Enhancing capacity-building in global public health".

The main elements of this draft resolution include recalling the Millennium Declaration adopted by heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit and the development goals contained therein, in particular the health-related development goals; recognizing that the globalization of trade and increased international travel have increased the risk of the rapid worldwide spread of infectious diseases, posing new challenges to public health; noting with concern the deleterious impact on humankind of various major infectious diseases and epidemics, especially the heavy burden they impose on the developing countries; welcoming the current success of the affected countries in combating severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS); emphasizing the need for greater international and regional cooperation to meet new and existing challenges to public health; welcoming the efforts of the World Health Organization and other United Nations bodies, as well as the private sector and civil society, aimed at enhancing capacity-building in global public health and at promoting public health at the country level.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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In the operative part, the draft urges Member States to further integrate public health into their national economic and social development strategies and consistently improve their public health systems; calls upon Member States and the international community to raise public awareness of good public health practices, including through education and the mass media; calls for the improvement of global public health preparedness and response systems, including systems of prevention and monitoring of infectious diseases; invites the regional social and economic commissions to cooperate closely with Member States in their capacity-building in public health; encourages United Nations agencies, bodies, funds and programmes to continue to address public health concerns in their development activities and programmes and to actively support capacity-building in global public health; and requests the Secretary-General to include observations on the issue of enhancing capacity-building in global public health in his report on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

During the consultations on this draft resolution, delegations put forward many constructive ideas and proposals that further enriched the draft resolution and made it more comprehensive. I am confident that the adoption of this draft resolution by the General Assembly will not only inspire Member States to give higher priority to capacity-building in public health, but also to play an important role in achieving the development goals set in the Millennium Declaration.

Before the text was issued, 120 countries joined in the sponsorship of this draft resolution. Now, another 24 countries have joined in sponsorship — Albania, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Gabon, Haiti, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Maldives, Mauritania, Monaco, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Seychelles, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uruguay and Uzbekistan. Please allow me to express, on behalf of the Chinese Government, our sincere thanks to all those countries that have shown interest and given their support. We hope that this draft resolution can be adopted by consensus.

The President: I call on the representative of Morocco, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Arrouchi (Morocco): I would like, on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77), to thank the delegation of China for having introduced this very important draft resolution on enhancing capacity-building in global public health. We fully support this initiative, as it will help the international community to further enhance capacity-building of global public health. This initiative will also contribute to the promotion of further implementation of the outcome of the Millennium Summit, particularly in reinforcing national public health infrastructures to face new challenges posed by deadly diseases worldwide. From the special session on HIV/AIDS, we know that the number of infected persons has increased from 36 million to 40 million, the majority of who are in Africa.

We look forward to a unanimous and enthusiastic decision by the General Assembly on this very important draft resolution.

Mr. Shamanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Regarding the draft resolution on capacity-building and global public health, we would like to point out the following.

At the crossroads of this twentieth and twenty-first century, public health has become a priority on the international agenda. The international community's consensus was reflected in a number of fundamental documents in recent times, including the Millennium Declaration and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty, protecting public health and strengthening national health services have taken on increasingly important roles, first of all as factors for the promotion and implementation of those objectives and secondly as indicators of the social and economic sustainability of society.

From this standpoint, we regard positively the Chinese-sponsored draft to enhance capacity-building in global public health and based on what we feel to be its great timeliness, we were one of the first sponsors. The principle importance of the document is that it does not focus on just one of the individual aspects of public health, but draws the attention of the international community to the strengthening of social public health services as the basic machinery. Major emphasis is put on the improvement of the systems for prevention and monitoring infectious diseases and for

establishing partnerships among Governments, organizations and institutions of the United Nations system and international financial institutions, as well as the private sector and other representatives of civil society.

We would like to highlight with satisfaction the successful work of our Chinese colleagues on coming to an agreement on the draft. Evidence of this is the great number of sponsors for this document. We hope that it can adopted by consensus and we believe that the adoption of this resolution will give further important momentum to international cooperation for the purpose of carrying out the tasks of public health and sustainable development.

Mr. Cardoso (Brazil): Let me convey my congratulations to the Chinese delegation for such an opportune and important initiative. Brazil was very pleased to be one of the sponsors at a very early stage of the consultations.

We note with satisfaction, out of the many important issues raised by this draft (A/58/L.5), a reference to the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council's recent decision on the implementation of paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) and public health. This is a life-saving decision that allows poorer countries to deal with diseases that devastate their people. The overwhelming majority of people suffering from infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, are in developing countries.

We attach great importance to health related issues. This year we will bring to the attention of the Third Committee initiatives already taken in the Commission on Human Rights on the universal right to enjoy the highest possible standard of physical and mental health and on access to medications in the context of pandemics such a as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

If we are to attain the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the health related Development Goals, we must persevere in enhancing capacity-building in global public health, especially in developing countries.

Mr. Nambiar (India): The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals of reducing child mortality, of improving maternal health and of combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases necessarily requires capacity-building in public health on a global basis.

Furthermore, ill health undermines economic development and impedes efforts to reduce poverty. Capacity-building in public health is in fact essential for economic growth and the achievement of the seven Development Goals of the Millennium Declaration.

India is happy to be associated with this draft resolution as a sponsor. We thank China for the initiative that they have taken.

In the context of the Development Goals adopted by the United Nations, it is important that the Organization also recognizes its close and direct link with public health. Not to do so would constitute a serious shortcoming in the details of any viable strategy for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Member States of the United Nations have the primary responsibility for building and strengthening their public health capacities. The draft resolution recognizes, however, that the magnitude of the challenge may be beyond the capabilities of many developing countries. We are pleased to see in the draft an emphasis on the importance of active international cooperation. The report that the Secretary-General will give to us at the next session will, we expect, help us further address this matter.

The Commission on Macroeconomics and Health had, in its 2001 report, provided an approach to the development cooperation goal of the Millennium Declaration. We recognize that there has been movement, albeit somewhat limited, on its recommendations. We are happy that India, particularly through its pharmaceutical manufacturing capabilities, has been able to make a contribution. We hope that this draft resolution will encourage further effort in the direction recommended by the Commission. We join China in expressing appreciation for the positive and constructive spirit of the consultations held on this draft and also look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Cumberbach Miguén (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like join other speakers in thanking the Chinese delegation for having introduced this initiative, of which my country has been a sponsor since its introduction.

Meeting here, our heads of State and Government proposed in the Millennium Summit Declaration that we enhance our citizens' health, one of many other goals furthering the development of our peoples.

In this context, Cuba thinks that it is essential to promote at the global level international cooperation activities that will lead to creating capacities and promoting public health, particularly in the third world. We are convinced that the draft resolution entitled "Enhancing capacity-building in global public health" (A/58/L.5) is an additional step forward in this direction. We would like to reiterate once again that our country will continue to support all international efforts in the health area to combat the evils afflicting the international community.

Mr. Mekprayoonthong (Thailand): My delegation wishes to express our appreciation to China for its important initiative to present this draft resolution for consideration by the General Assembly.

The emergence of new epidemics in the twenty-first century has called for collective action from the international community on the basis of shared responsibilities. Thailand hosted the special meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders and China in Bangkok in April 2003 to encourage strong political commitment and strengthen cooperation in order to contain severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

The success in combating severe acute respiratory syndrome has proven that regional and international cooperation are vital to cope with the common threat of infectious diseases. In that regard, Thailand joins other countries in sponsoring this draft resolution and looks forward to its adoption by consensus. My delegation believes that adoption of this draft resolution will lead to significant enhancement of capacity-building in global public health. That is crucial for the strengthening of global capacity to contain this common threat to our peoples.

Mr. Andrabi (Pakistan): One of the greatest challenges that humanity faces in the twenty-first century is the spread of infectious diseases, both emerging and re-emerging. Although the exact sources of many new diseases are still being researched, the phenomenon of globalization — people coming into closer contact with other people — has permitted a jump of infectious agents across borders. This has given a global complexion to the problem. It needs a global response.

Infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria have devastated millions of people. The process of development in countries afflicted by those diseases has come to a grinding halt. These epidemics have rolled back decades of progress and prosperity with their devastating effect. Public health has therefore acquired a very prominent place on the development agenda. Economic growth and social development must go hand in hand, and the two need to complement each other.

Reversing the spread of major diseases by the end of 2015 is one of the development goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. Last year, a new epidemic — severe acute respiratory syndrome — broke out in more than 30 countries and regions, causing over 800 deaths and more than 8,000 cases of infection. Its outbreak and spread pose a threat to public health undertakings. The fact that its cause remains unknown heightens the level of threat. We commend the efforts made by China and other affected countries to take effective measures not only to combat the epidemic, but also to control its spread. However, it has become quite clear that, without effective international cooperation, such problems cannot be effectively dealt with.

This calls for closer international cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect and benefit. Special attention needs to be paid to the establishment and improvement of the global contingency reaction mechanism. Simultaneously, the ability to respond effectively to such major health disasters also needs to be enhanced. The United Nations system, therefore, needs to consider integrating public health issues into its activities and programmes. The aim should be to further strengthen the capacity of Member States and to facilitate international cooperation in public health.

Against that backdrop, we consider the Chinese draft resolution (A/58/L.5) a timely initiative and a major step in the right direction. We thank China for its efforts to draft a consensus resolution with broad sponsorship. Pakistan has fully supported this initiative since its inception and has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Adoption of this draft resolution by the General Assembly would enable the international community to effectively help developing countries develop their economies, improve the level of health

care and reduce the probability of the outbreak of diseases.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.5, entitled "Enhancing capacity-building in global public health".

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/58/L.5, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Eritrea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine and Venezuela.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.5?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/3).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 60.

Agenda items 55, 57, 58 and 59

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/57/786, A/58/175, A/58/351, A/58/382, A/58/395 and A/58/395/Corr.1)

The President: Members will recall that at the 90th plenary meeting of the fifty-seventh session, held on 18 June 2003, the General Assembly decided to defer consideration of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change: Intergovernmental review of the medium-term plan and the programme budget" (A/57/786) to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system".

The General Assembly begins discussion this morning on a cluster of reform items. Particular attention will be focused on agenda item 55, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly". Delegations will also wish to pay attention to the reports of the Secretary-General under item 59, which describe the actions taken by the Secretary-General in implementation of Assembly resolution 57/300.

From the time that I was elected President in June of this year, I have considered United Nations reform to be a matter of the highest priority. As Member States may be aware, I have already begun to take practical steps to streamline the work of the Assembly and to make better use of the General Committee as a body providing coordinating and oversight advise and support to the President.

I have also begun to look into the provisions of various General Assembly resolutions that confer specific responsibilities on the President, but which may not have been implemented. Thus, for example, I provided an assessment of the debate on the report of the Security Council, an action that had been authorized by the Assembly but not implemented.

As Chairman of the Assembly Working Group on revitalization, I have a personal responsibility in respect of item 55. I also have a deep, personal commitment. The comments made by speakers in the general debate, including those made by a large number of heads of State and Government, indicate that Member States consider that the time has come for serious consideration to be given to a wide range of reform issues.

Reform and revitalization of the General Assembly figure prominently among those issues. Speaker after speaker has also reaffirmed his or her commitment to the Organization and the provisions of the Charter. Having come here and made that reaffirmation, I believe that the leaders in capitals are now looking to those of us in this Hall today to proceed from discussion to action. I trust therefore that the debate that we are about to have will reflect this approach and that speakers will seek to be straightforward and precise in expressing their views.

In order to move forward, we need to speak frankly to each other and we need to make specific proposals. Upon the conclusion of this debate, I shall announce the facilitators whom I have designated to move the process forward. I will work closely with the

facilitators and coordinate their work. I will also discuss with them a time frame for the negotiation process. I have already sought to provide a framework for action by way of the informal note that I circulated a week and a half ago, which served as a background paper to the informal open-ended plenary consultations that took place on 17 October. It seems to me that that meeting went well and helped to launch our deliberations on this item.

Before concluding, I extend a special welcome to the Women's International Forum, whose members impressed me tremendously by their interest in matters relating to the reform and revitalization of the Security Council and the General Assembly, respectively.

I now call on the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: It is a great pleasure for me to join the Assembly today to present the Secretary-General's report on implementation of his agenda for further change, contained in document A/58/351.

This is a moment when the United Nations is facing formidable challenges and wrestling with fundamental questions. The Secretary-General, in his speech to the General Assembly at the opening of the general debate, called for bold changes in order to ensure that our Organization is up to the task. At the same time, it is important not to lose sight of the practical measures and day-to-day steps that need to be taken to strengthen, adapt and otherwise equip the United Nations to meet the tests of our times.

A lot has already been achieved since the process of reform was initiated by the Secretary-General upon taking office in 1997. The Millennium Declaration that the Assembly adopted three years ago gives the world a common vision for the new century, including a set of Development Goals that now serves as a template for action by the entire international system. Through the Brahimi report and other initiatives, we have made major improvements in our capacity to deploy and manage complex peacekeeping and peace-building operations.

We have developed new mechanisms and procedures to ensure that the disparate parts of the Organization work better together both at headquarters and in the field. We have built strong new partnerships with the private sector, civil society groups and others, bringing new energies to the pursuit of our common goals. And we have stressed managerial reform more than ever before in recognition of the need to modernize our systems and our skills.

Last year, the Secretary-General introduced an "agenda for further change" that sought to build on these achievements and take into account important developments in the international arena, most notably the Millennium Declaration. The report now before the Assembly sets out what has been done to implement the new agenda and describes the steps to be taken next. It also, of course, reflects the guidance that the Assembly provided in last year's resolution. Allow me to mention a few highlights.

The budget submitted this year represents a major effort to realign activities with priorities and to increase attention to development issues, in particular the Millennium Development Goals. The Secretary-General will offer greater details tomorrow in his address to the Fifth Committee to introduce the 2004-2005 budget. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has moved forward with efforts to improve management and the services it provides. Restructuring of the Department of Public Information has taken place and the regional information centre for Western Europe will be fully operational next year. We have made major innovations in managing conferences and meetings, in particular through greater reliance on information technology.

The streamlining of reports, considered essential to better focus the work of the General Assembly, its subsidiary bodies and the Economic and Social Council, has been initiated. A number of reports on related subjects were consolidated, leading to an overall reduction during this session of approximately 20 reports from what was originally foreseen. Further progress on this front will depend in large part on decisions which the Member States can take in the context of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and the integrated follow-up to conferences.

The United Nations presence in developing countries is being made more effective through simplification and harmonization of procedures, joint programming, the pooling of resources, better knowledge management and improvements in the Resident Coordinator system. A review of technical cooperation activities in key areas was carried out and is being transmitted to the Assembly in a separate report. The review identifies the various Secretariat

entities and operational agencies involved in the provision of technical cooperation in a selected number of issues, as well as areas where further clarification of roles and responsibilities will be undertaken in order to avoid duplication. It is hoped that this compendium will be a useful source of information for programme countries and the donor community.

The Panel Of Eminent Persons on United Nations Relations with Civil Society, which the Secretary-General announced in his reform report last year, was formed last February. It is chaired by the former President of Brazil, Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and comprises 12 members from all regions of the world. The Panel's report is expected early in the new year.

We are also continuing to make new investments in our staff through training. With the appointment of a new Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources, renewed impetus will be given to the implementation of the measures identified in the Secretary-General's report last year, particularly as regards staff mobility and career prospects for General Service staff.

Some of the reform activities I have just mentioned are covered in greater detail in complementary reports. These are identified in the report before the Assembly today and should be read in conjunction with it. While implementation is under way on all elements of the Secretary-General's reform package of last year, there is one major piece of unfinished business. I refer here to the reform of the planning and budgeting system.

The Secretary-General argued in his report last year that the process needs to be more strategic and results-oriented, and less time-consuming. He proposed changes to the format and content of the budget document. He proposed that the strategic framework for the Organization should consist of a medium-term plan covering a two-year period, combined with the budget outline. He also suggested that the Committee for Programme and Coordination shift its focus to monitoring and evaluating the work of the United Nations — critical functions that are all too often overlooked or given short shrift — rather than replicating the reviews of plans and budgets already done by other bodies.

The Assembly did not reach decisions on most of those issues last year, and requested supplementary information. That information is contained in documents A/57/786 and A/58/395. The changes proposed are not dramatic, but if adopted they would significantly improve the quality of the budget process while reducing the amount of time and the quantity of documentation that go into it. I hope that the Assembly will take a decision before the end of the year so that the changes can shape the way in which the budget for 2006-2007 is developed.

Reform is not a single, specific destination. Rather, it is a wide-ranging — indeed, an all-encompassing — journey. Ultimately it is a state of mind — an openness to new ideas and partners, a continuous search for better ways of doing our work, a commitment to excellence, a talent for focusing on what matters, an appetite for service.

All of the reforms, big and small, swift or slow, internal or intergovernmental, that have been achieved show not only that the United Nations can change, but that change is an integral part of the way we do business. Indeed, change has been our métier since our earliest days. We all look forward to wise decisions in the days ahead that will enable us to keep it so for the future.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I have the honour to address the Assembly on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and Australia. I also wish to associate my delegation with the statement that the Foreign Minister of Fiji will deliver on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Canada, New Zealand and Australia are convinced that the need for reform in the United Nations is more pressing than ever before. The Secretary-General is right to say that the United Nations has reached a historic fork in the road. We are encouraged by our sense that there is greater realization of this, and believe that a rare opportunity for us to act will exist this year and perhaps next year. After that, it may be too late.

Today's debate covers reform processes in several parts of the United Nations, and I will mention a few of them specifically. The common problem faced by all ideas for change in the United Nations is generating enough political will to overcome the inertia intrinsic to an Organization governed by 191 sovereign Members. Certainly, there is no lack of good reform ideas here. But a decade of labours towards revitalizing the Assembly and making the Security Council more representative has, frankly, produced few results.

The bright spot has been the leadership of the Secretary-General — ably assisted by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Fréchette — who has achieved welcome progress in modernizing and improving the Secretariat. The Brahimi peacekeeping reforms will stand as another of his achievements. The Secretary-General recently announced a new panel that will examine the policy challenges facing the Organization and the institutional structures needed to meet them. Such an examination is very timely and much needed. The panel should consult widely with Member States and be bold in its analysis and recommendations. Our delegations stand ready to contribute, and we look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's proposals next year. In the meantime, however, there is plenty that needs doing.

A year ago, the Secretary-General presented the Assembly with a fresh agenda for reform (see A/57/387). This year he has given us a progress report, submitted several detailed reports on specific proposals and requested our approval for other reforms in the 2004-2005 budget.

Resolution 57/300 broadly welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals. Since then, we have been disappointed that, whatever reform actions have been discussed, there has been resistance or opposition from one quarter or another. For instance, in the Committee on Programme and Coordination in June, every one of the reform measures proposed in the budget was criticized and efforts were mounted to block several of them.

This year, with elaborated and refined proposals before it, the Assembly needs to take decisions. Our delegations will give full support to the implementation of the Secretary-General's measures in all intergovernmental bodies.

Many proposals have now been referred to the Fifth Committee. Reform must be the abiding theme of deliberations and decisions there. The Fifth Committee has a particular responsibility to advance management and administrative reforms that make the Organization stronger and more effective.

Our delegations attach special importance to the request by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a greater share of the regular budget. In particular, we support the new posts to strengthen the human rights treaty bodies, in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations.

The budget, planning and evaluation cycle is of critical importance to the Organization. That cycle brings together the many legislative mandates created by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiaries, and it matches them with the finite resources available to the Organization.

The two reports before us on improvements to the current process of planning and budgeting (A/57/786 and A/58/395) offer a compelling diagnosis of flaws in the current process. Taken as a whole, the process is so protracted and burdensome that it disenfranchises the majority of Member States. The medium-term plan, as now constructed, leads to rigidity in the Secretariat's work and inhibits our ability to respond to changing circumstances. Programmes and resources are considered on separate tracks, undermining the development of results-based budgeting. Furthermore, programmatic evaluation does not feed back into the planning and budgeting cycle.

We consider that modest refinements of the process could lead to significant improvements. Our approach is based on five principles. First, the process should better support results-based budgeting; secondly, programme and resource decisions should be integrated; thirdly, Member States should be able to give strategic policy direction; fourthly, evaluation of results must be effective and affect planning; and lastly, the intergovernmental organs must spend less time on reviewing the budget.

The Secretary-General's proposals offer a way forward and a starting point for our discussions. But we will take a flexible and creative approach to finding a set of reforms that serves all of us better and makes the Organization stronger.

We welcome your efforts, Mr. President, to inject life into the process of revitalizing the General Assembly. Our delegations believe that revitalization needs to start with the second of the two areas that you have identified: improved working methods. The agenda is the core of the malaise in the Assembly. It is overloaded, outdated, highly repetitive and often of marginal relevance, even in the capitals of Member States, let alone to their peoples. As everyone knows, the Assembly spends most of its time negotiating the same resolutions, year after year.

We must start with a thorough reappraisal of the agenda. We could, for example, envisage a streamlined agenda of a limited number of items relevant in terms

of contemporary problems and challenges. Such an agenda would be established anew for each Assembly session. We need to concentrate on resolutions that are meaningful and can be implemented. At the same time, we should evaluate the committee structure and reshape it to fit a new agenda that focuses on the major issues facing the globe today.

Only by making fundamental changes to its work programme and methods can we restore the authority and prestige of the Assembly. While the biennialization of some items has helped to rationalize the agenda, that is not enough to turn the Assembly into the thriving centre of the multilateral system that it ought to be.

The revitalization process has yielded so little not because of a lack of good ideas, but because of a lack of political will. If the Assembly is going to be revitalized, then all Member States need to reassess their positions and be prepared to adapt their preferences to accommodate those of others. Without recognition by all parties of our shared interest in a productive and effective multilateral system, the Assembly will continue to wither.

The common challenge facing proposals for reform is to create political will and generate momentum. Our endeavours to make the United Nations more productive and effective assume even greater importance in this complex and daunting international environment.

Mr. Tavola (Fiji): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Pacific Islands Forum that are represented at the United Nations: Australia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Fiji.

The Pacific Islands Forum comprises both developing and developed countries. We are predominantly small States. We share a strong interest in making the United Nations and its processes more efficient, because we have limited resources ourselves and because a more efficient Organization will give the United Nations greater credibility worldwide. We share a strong interest in reforms that will enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations and focus the Organization and its constituent parts on today's priorities.

The case for reform has been made and, in our view, is widely accepted. We agree with those who sense that the prospects for reform look brighter than they have in the past. We must seize the opportunity. Our task is to engage in processes that will deliver specific reforms on which we can all agree. Several reforms are under way, because reform is necessary at a number of levels.

At the highest level, we need to look at the role of our major governance organs and the relationship among them. Secondly, we need to continue work on strengthening the United Nations as an organization. Thirdly, we need to breathe new life into the General Assembly. Those areas of reform are closely linked; I will comment on each.

The Pacific Islands Forum fully supports the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel to review the functioning of our major bodies and consider reforms to our institutions and processes. The Secretary-General rightly places that review in the context of an examination of global challenges to the United Nations, particularly — but not exclusively — challenges to peace and security. The panel should not shy away from difficult, fundamental questions. We urge all Member States to be open to the process. While many may have anxieties about the options and the potential implications of those options, we should not step away from exploring the possibilities. The panel will need to consult widely, and we look to it to provide an independent, honest and fresh assessment of where we go from here.

Last December, we adopted resolution 57/300, which goes some way towards strengthening the United Nations. Good progress has been made, but much remains to be done. Our delegations are committed and supportive of this ongoing process. The Secretary-General's progress report (A/58/351) reflects a substantive effort across a very broad range of United Nations activities, spanning human rights, the Organization's outreach to civil society and the private sector, and strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations presence in developing countries. Some of those proposals are well developed, and the ideas that underpin them are not new. We support the overall direction and leadership provided by the Secretary-General. We agree that the budget for 2004-2005 provides a good vehicle for implementing many proposals, and we shall follow these discussions very closely.

The Pacific Forum group of Member States has a particular interest in strengthening United Nations operational activities for development, and we strongly support the thrust of the Organization's work in that area. The work of the United Nations Development Group and the strengthening of the resident coordinator system have been positive developments. We strongly support continuing to improve coordination among United Nations funds and programmes, in particular through the simplification and harmonization of their work. The aim of reducing transaction costs is a particularly important one for developing countries in the Pacific, given their generally small size and the constraints on their capacity. Australia and New Zealand, as regional donors, also support that aim as a means of ensuring that contributions to United Nations development activities are used to best effect. The appointment of lead United Nations agencies to coordinate sector-wide inputs is another positive development. It could add welcome flexibility to enable United Nations agencies to work together coherently in partnership with host Governments, while at the same time reducing unnecessary duplication of reporting and other activities.

We also welcome the improved focus on post-conflict transition. That is an area where United Nations funds and programmes have provided useful input in two Pacific Islands Forum member countries, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. These ongoing reforms are important in an increasingly field-based Organization, and our delegations look forward to discussions during next year's triennial policy review of operational activities.

In the area of strengthening human rights, we welcome the recognition in the report of the importance of the role of national human rights institutions. We should also like to see better targeting of technical assistance in support of the treaty body and special procedures systems. We need to find pragmatic solutions to the demands that increased treaty body reporting and compliance place on small States.

Mr. President, the Pacific Islands Forum welcomes your own recent initiative to provide a framework for revitalization of the General Assembly. The Forum fully supports proposals that will make the General Assembly more efficient in its operation and more focused and relevant in the issues it addresses. We would emphasize that we seek changes not in order to diminish the role of the General Assembly, but in order to enhance its relevance. We recognize that, for all of us, there will be a balance between national and collective interests. But at its heart, the United Nations is about the collective good, and achieving effective collective action may require us at times to rise above national interests.

Mr. President, your informal note usefully sets out the possible areas of reform under two broad headings. You have highlighted a number of specific proposals. These and others will need to be developed and discussed. We look to the process being transparent and inclusive and welcome your intention to appoint facilitators. There is also an important role for individual committee-based discussions involving a bottom-up as well as a top-down approach.

In many ways, it is the plenary of the General Assembly that needs most attention. If debates are poorly attended and have little impact, we need to ask why. We need to think more about what role we want the General Assembly to play. In the view of the Pacific Islands Forum, the plenary should address key curr nt issues in a way that enhances the authority of the General Assembly. The Assembly should provide strategic guidance to the rest of the United Nations system.

We fully support the basic concept of the general debate. It is the one time of the year when a large number of Heads of Government and ministers engage with the United Nations and with each other. Formal statements setting out national positions and priorities are important, but beyond this we believe that, where possible, plenary sessions should involve a much more interactive exchange of views on priority issues. The term "debate" should not be a euphemism. There will, of course, be differences in the priority individual Member States attach to particular issues. That should not surprise us, but we can probably agree on many of the priorities for discussion and find creative ways of managing situations where we cannot presently agree. We also support thematic debates if they can be constructed to encourage meaningful discussion with outcomes that enhance the role of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, you have rightly referred to the possibility of rationalizing existing agenda items. We think, by way of example, that our consideration of reform itself has become somewhat splintered and that a combined interactive debate on all aspects of United

Nations reform might be useful. It would focus on Members' broad views on the reforms they wished to pursue, with details being discussed in more informal settings.

On the other side, we wonder whether there are major current issues that this Assembly should be, but is currently not discussing. For example, peacekeeping is among the United Nations most important activities and has a high public profile. Should not the General Assembly, at its highest level, be discussing peacekeeping issues? We would envisage such a discussion looking at the broader process of United Nations intervention, from conflict prevention through peacekeeping to the United Nations role in post-conflict situations. These issues have development as well as political and security aspects and bridge discussions taking place in a number of committees. Under the Charter, these are legitimate concerns of the General Assembly.

How we discuss issues is as important as the issues we discuss. If the plenary remains no more than a formal venue for delivering national statements, then, in terms of promoting the collective will of the United Nations, we will not be able to make it more relevant to the outside world.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Let me begin by thanking the Deputy Secretary-General for personally introducing the Secretary-General's reports on United Nations reform. The Deputy Secretary-General's commitment and dedication to United Nations reform are truly appreciated.

Allow me also to pay particular tribute to you, Sir, for the work you have invested in attempting to revitalize and improve the working methods of the General Assembly. There seems to be a willingness of Member States to take a closer look at how to improve the General Assembly, including the various Committees. We must take advantage of this growing momentum, and let me assure you, Sir, that Norway stands ready to support you in the weeks and months ahead.

In keeping with the prevailing reform spirit, I shall limit my intervention to a few main points, while circulating the full text of my prepared remarks.

The Secretary-General's opening statement to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly inspired us all to take a new look at United Nations reform. We share the Secretary-General's vision of global solidarity and security. Norway supports reforms leading to a more representative Security Council. We would like to see a more effective and efficient General Assembly with a better managed and more relevant agenda. The Economic and Social Council should be a real force in international development cooperation and a true partner to the Bretton Woods institutions. After years of discussions in working groups and other forums, we always seem to reach a stalemate. We therefore applaud the establishment of a high-level Panel of Eminent Persons to review these issues and recommend ways of strengthening the United Nations. We look forward to their findings and recommendations.

We need not wait for the recommendations of the Panel, however. There are measures that we can implement during the current session of the General Assembly. This leads me to the Secretary-General's proposals and recommendations, as contained in the reports prepared pursuant to last year's resolution 57/300, as well as to your concrete proposals, Mr. President. They are all important building blocks in the overarching reform of the United Nations.

Let me highlight some aspects of the Secretary-General's proposals and our views on them. Norway welcomes the emphasis on human rights in the report before us in document A/58/351. The work of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in integrating human rights into all United Nations activities, particularly in areas such as humanitarian affairs, conflict prevention and peacekeeping, is of utmost importance. True respect for and protection of human rights starts at home. We applaud the concerted effort under way to provide an integrated and consistent response to Member States' requests for support in strengthening their national human rights systems. The ongoing work for enhanced implementation of human rights treaties, as well as for improving the system of special procedures, is both timely and necessary.

Increasing the effectiveness of development assistance is a prerequisite for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Improving the consistency and coordination of United Nations activities at the country level and increasing programme effectiveness is, in that respect, essential. We thus support the Secretary-General's proposals on strengthening the role, authority and capacity of the

United Nations Resident Coordinator, making the Coordinator the leader of a truly integrated United Nations country team. Norway is encouraged by the contributions and advances that the United Nations Development Group is making in the area of coordination and joint programming. A strengthened United Nations Development Assistance Framework and new joint programming tools are important and practical ways of moving this process ahead.

Commitment to United Nations reform will be a significant factor in our assessment of the various agencies and a precondition for further and increased Norwegian contributions. During the triennial comprehensive policy review next year, we will have the opportunity to assess whether or not we are progressing as rapidly as we would wish.

The Secretary-General has already taken action and made changes and improvements in a number of important fields. We note with satisfaction that these changes and reallocations of resources are concentrated in areas where we all share the same priorities. His actions clearly show an increased attention to development issues and particularly the special needs of Africa. There is also a new emphasis on an improved and enlightened human resources strategy and continued efforts to improve the Organization's management in general. We applaud those changes.

The revised budget format is a first important step in pursuing the Organization's priorities as defined by the Millennium Declaration and recent global conferences. The Secretary-General has proposed further improvements to the planning and budgeting system, including a shorter and more strategic medium-term plan that is linked to the budget and a single-stage intergovernmental review of the budget. The Norwegian Government supports those changes.

There are other areas in the Secretary-General's reform programme where consensus is not as apparent. The Millennium Declaration promises to give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general to contribute to the realization of the Organization's goals and programmes. The United Nations has different rules and practices for its various bodies. There is no system of accreditation to the General Assembly.

We are particularly keen on finding ways to make it easier for civil society actors and non-governmental organizations from the developing countries to play central roles in United Nations activities. This will also facilitate mobilization of the enormous resources of civil society for development cooperation. We therefore have great expectations as regards the upcoming recommendations of the Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations Relations with Civil Society.

Before concluding, I would like to return to your appeal, Mr. President, for concrete proposals as regards the working methods of the General Assembly. I would like, however, to remind the Assembly that there have indeed been improvements in our working methods in the past few years. Agenda items and debates have been successfully merged, most recently during our consideration a few days ago of issues related to Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Perhaps we should aim to make some concrete improvements in the area of resolutions as well. Resolutions and decisions are, after all, the main products of our work. We should look at ways of making them more operational and relevant. We do not need resolutions that are lengthy documents with the same text, year after year.

Perhaps the General Assembly should consider some limitations or guidelines on the length and composition of, and degree of repetition in, its resolutions. I believe that we should look to the practices of the funds and programmes in this respect. As to our lengthy agenda, it is indeed symptomatic of the problem that our discussions today cover four agenda items, two of them without any content or reporting requirements. Why, then, are they still on our agenda?

Norway is convinced that under the leadership of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and, more directly, under your leadership, Sir, Member States will rise to the occasion and take decisive action that will improve the efficiency of this most important of all multilateral institutions.

Mr. Baali (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf the Non-Aligned Movement Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly and the reform of the United Nations.

Mr. President, the main point that the Non-Aligned Movement Working Group wishes to convey today is its strong support for your continued efforts towards an authentic and genuine revitalization of the General Assembly, so as to restore its central position

as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, as set out in paragraph 30 of the Millennium Declaration.

We would like also to express our sincere appreciation to you, Sir, for having presented the non-paper that you and your competent team prepared, which we believe constitutes an excellent basis for today's debate as well as for our future efforts aimed at revitalizing the General Assembly.

We particularly appreciate the fact that you have indicated that you will take the lead in pursuing efforts to advance the process of revitalization. In this context, I can assure you of the full confidence of the Non-Aligned Movement Working Group and its support for your undertaking.

The Working Group attaches great importance to the revitalization of the General Assembly and to improving its efficiency, and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its willingness to participate actively in that important process.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the steps you have proposed and most of the measures outlined in the non-paper, which correspond to the position and the approach adopted by the Working Group concerning the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly. An assessment of the progress achieved so far in the process of revitalizing the General Assembly, which started in the early 1990s, is needed before any additional measures in this regard can be considered.

Since 1993, the General Assembly has adopted several resolutions aimed at rationalizing its working methods and improving its efficiency. Among those resolutions, let me recall in particular resolutions 47/233 of 17 August 1993, 48/264 of 29 July 1994, 51/241 of 31 July 1997, 55/285 of 10 September 2001, 57/301 of 17 March 2003 and many other resolutions listed in the background information paper that you have circulated.

The measures outlined in the aforementioned resolutions put more emphasis on the rationalization of the agenda of the General Assembly and its working methods and less on the substantive aspects of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

The measures taken for the rationalization of the agenda — clustering and the biennialization and triannualization of items — and the working methods of the General Assembly and its Main Committees have contributed, to a certain extent, to a better functioning of the Assembly. However, those measures have had minimal impact in helping to achieve the main goal set out in paragraph 30 of the Millennium Declaration.

Equally important is the need fully to comply with the relevant guidelines on the rationalization of the agenda of the plenary and of the respective agendas of the main Committees, as outlined in annex I of resolution 48/264 and in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

These guidelines are the following. First, agenda items concerning issues of closely related substance could be merged within a single agenda item or be incorporated as sub-items where this is possible without any loss of focus on the items or sub-items concerned. Secondly, items that cover related matters or issues could be considered in agreed clusters. Thirdly, biennialization and triennialization of items on the agenda of the Main Committees could be considered. Fourthly and lastly, the existing broad division of work among the Main Committees should be maintained.

The purpose of the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly is defined in paragraph 1 of the annex to resolution 55/285. In that paragraph, it is stated that:

> "The process of revitalizing the General Assembly and improving its efficiency focuses on the implementation of existing Assembly resolutions and decisions ... Improvement of the procedures and working methods of the Assembly is only a first step towards more substantive improvements in and revitalization of the Assembly. The goal of this ongoing process is to enable the Assembly to play its role effectively as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations".

As you have indicated in your non-paper, Mr. President, there are a number of measures contained in various resolutions, particularly resolutions 51/241 and 55/285, which have not been implemented. We appreciate the action you have taken so far in giving effect to some of those measures and look forward to further action to ensure their full implementation, including that of the measure contained in paragraph 12 of the annex to resolution

51/241, regarding General Assembly consideration of the report of the Security Council.

As part of the efforts aimed at resolving the problem of late issuance of documents and its negative impact on the work of the Assembly, the Secretary-General, in his report entitled "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), proposed certain measures to streamline documentation, such as consolidating documents on related subjects, requiring reports to be sharper with more clearly defined recommendations for action, and observing a stipulated page limit of 16 pages. These measures, particularly the consolidation of documents — mainly those to be considered by the Third Committee and the Second Committee — will be reviewed in the context of the follow-up to resolution 57/300.

All these measures aimed at rationalizing the procedures and working methods of the General Assembly have had a positive effect on the functioning of the Assembly. However, a genuine and authentic revitalization of the General Assembly can be achieved only through additional bold and innovative measures that address the problem of the relative marginalization of the Assembly and its relationship with the other organs of the United Nations, especially the Security Council.

During its last meeting, the Non-Aligned Movement working group considered the two broad areas outlined in your non-paper, Mr. President, namely, enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly and improving its working methods, and discussed some of the concrete proposals contained therein. However, given the time constraints, the working group was not able to consider thoroughly all the specific measures you proposed. The Non-Aligned Movement will therefore continue to study carefully the proposals put forward in the non-paper, so as to reflect on them in the context of the informal consultations you intend to convene in mid-November 2003.

At this stage of the process aimed at revitalizing the Assembly, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to put on the record the following.

First, the Non-Aligned Movement believes that the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly would be a concrete measure to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Assembly, and we cannot but support such a measure. A well staffed Office would provide the requisite substantive support to the President to enable him to play a leadership role, would provide continuity and institutional memory to the Office of the presidency and would enrich the substantive content of proposals emanating from the Office of the President. The Non-Aligned Movement will, in due time, articulate and submit a concrete proposal in that regard.

Secondly, the Non-Aligned Movement supports the proposals aimed at programming the consideration of agenda items over the full year of the session, rather than concentrating them in the period from September to December, as is the current practice. If General Assembly agenda items could be grouped according to their importance and urgency, such sequencing could make effective use of the whole year. That would reduce the burden put on small and medium-size delegations and enable them to participate effectively in the negotiation process and in the huge number of meetings — more than 6,000 — held each year at Headquarters in New York.

Thirdly, the Non-Aligned Movement believes that Member States have an important role to play in implementing resolutions, particularly their sponsors, which could take more responsibility in that regard. On the other hand, there are some resolutions that have not been implemented because of a lack of resources and it is essential in those cases that adequate resources be allocated to ensure their implementation.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a high-level panel for the reform of the principal organs of the Organization and the review of their effectiveness, their coherence and the balance of roles and responsibilities among them. The imminent personalities who will be members of the panel should meet important requirements such as high integrity, competence and neutrality, and should be knowledgeable about the functioning and the intricacies of the Organization.

Mr. Acosta Bonilla (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Further, we believe that the panel should also take into account what has been accomplished so far in the various processes of institutional reform. The Movement believes that the current revitalization exercise, and whatever exercise we may engage in

regarding the reform of the Security Council, should at some point converge with the new process initiated by the Secretary-General.

Those are a few of the ideas we wanted to share at this stage. The Non-Aligned Movement working group is still considering and working on further proposals. I intend during the coming weeks to submit to the President and to the whole membership some concrete proposals which we hope will strengthen the efficiency of the work of the General Assembly and enhance its political role as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations. It is also our intention to fully cooperate with the President and to interact with all groups and delegations to achieve that goal.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I am pleased to speak after my Algerian brother, Ambassador Baali, because we also hope to coordinate our efforts with the Malaysian presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement in our important task of United Nations reform.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend to the Secretary-General the sincere congratulations of the Group of 77 on all his efforts to foster his agenda for change, designed to refocus United Nations activities on priorities which we, as Member States, laid down in the Millennium Declaration and in the major United Nations conferences and summits held in recent years.

Reform is a process. This process requires a strategy and priorities to address all the challenges of globalization. The challenges for us in the Group of 77 are, first of all, the reduction of poverty, as well as the maintenance of international peace and security, because the two go together: there can be no maintenance of peace, strictly speaking, without economic security. But this also pertains to all of what we now call the new threats to peace, and especially to the campaign to combat international terrorism.

Our objective is to best serve humankind, to improve the standard of living of millions of people who are suffering the ordeals of poverty, illness and all the other devastating scourges. That is the principle of our collective action, which should guide us when we talk about reform and which must be followed with respect for the basic values that informed the birth of the United Nations.

We are convinced that reform of the multilateral institutions is more necessary than ever to enable those institutions, under optimal circumstances, to adapt to the new problems and new situations facing the world. This common exercise should be accompanied by a sustained effort and by real determination to strengthen our collective action and realize the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

Reform is not an end in itself. Its main objective is to strengthen international cooperation and to ensure the fulfilment of commitments entered into during United Nations conferences and summits, with a view to enabling the developing countries, especially the poorest and least developed among them, to attain the Millennium Development Goals for the economic and social well-being of their peoples.

Strengthening our Organization requires an overhaul of the architecture of the intergovernmental bodies and of their work programmes and methods — primarily the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council.

Regarding the Security Council, the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, it is obvious that the conditions which led to agreement on its membership and functioning have changed profoundly. Therefore, the question of Security Council reform should be on the agenda of meetings among our leaders, so that they can outline Council reforms that we would then refine in New York so they may then be placed in the context of a reformed Charter.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is at the heart of the necessary United Nations reform. It cannot be carried out piecemeal but must be part of a consistent approach. All efforts must be channelled towards the objectives which our heads of State or Government set out in the general debate during this session of the General Assembly, so as to ensure the positive involvement of expertise and political will. All parties involved in international relations have expressed their support for this reform, in the conviction that a more efficient organization better adapted to the post-cold-war world is in the interest of all members of the family of nations, whatever their size, religion or culture.

The Group of 77 and China was created in the 1960s to work together for the democratization of international relations by eliminating the major

disparities which divided the members of the international community. Strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations has thus always been among our priorities. It should enable us to act better to reduce poverty and eliminate the most serious social problems.

Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration we have spared no effort towards the convening of major international conferences on sustainable development, financing of development or international trade. This year, thanks to the efforts of all, we succeeded in adopting resolution 57/270 B on the integrated follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of those major conferences, in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Resolution 57/270 B means that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council can play a role in monitoring and following up implementation and in the adoption of necessary adjustment measures. To that end, the Economic and Social Council should be more active in coordinating the activities of the specialized agencies and in strengthening cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions in order to give them the necessary momentum.

The composition of the Economic and Social Council, in relation to its effectiveness increased, should be the subject of an in-depth analysis. We hope that this analysis will be carried out as quickly as possible. Moreover, it is important for the General Assembly to be in session throughout the year and to respond to proposals from anywhere in the world, directly or via the Economic and Social Council, so as to prepare studies and react promptly to the challenges of globalization. In the same vein, the role and presence of the presidency of the General Assembly must be strengthened and given adequate resources to that end.

The General Assembly should be able to set up thematic groups whenever issues arise on which it must take a stand. The membership of such groups, if they are open-ended, could work with full respect for transparency. It is in this manner that we worked well this year in the open-ended ad hoc working group on integrated follow-up and implementation of the major United Nations conferences.

The Group of 77 and China will support all initiatives to ensure the better effectiveness and visibility of the work of the General Assembly. We believe the Assembly can make better use of its decision-making power involving budgetary matters, a power which it has under Article 17 of the Charter. We must continue budgetary and financial reform along the lines set forth by resolution 57/300. This means that the General Assembly must have the resources necessary to make strategic choices and decide on priorities when it enters into a budgetary exercise. Such an exercise cannot be only technical, and cannot lie within the sole purview of Fifth Committee experts. In this connection, consideration of the future of the Committee for Programme and Coordination should go forward so that the Committee's functions are actually carried out.

As I just said, it would be useful to extend the work of the General Assembly to the entire calendar year so that we can focus on our various activities in a way that would make us as visible as possible. Work on revitalization and reform, now begun, should certainly continue next year, without awaiting the report of the panel of eminent personalities to be set up by the Secretary-General.

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to preparation for the high-level meeting scheduled for 2005 on the integrated follow-up and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, as provided for in resolution 57/270 B. We hope that the 2005 summit will give impetus to development questions before the General Assembly. To that end, the summit should be prepared with all the requisite professionalism during the upcoming year. A preparatory committee will probably need to be set up to ensure the success of the 2005 summit, which for us, as a developing country, will provide an important stimulus.

The Group of 77 and China intend to give the presidency all cooperation necessary for the early attainment of concrete results because we believe that this is the best way to initiate the much desired dynamic of reform.

Mr. Balarezo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour to speak on behalf of the 19 member States of the Rio Group: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela and my country, Peru.

The Rio Group reaffirms its full support and cooperation in the effort to revitalize the work of the General Assembly. Also, it welcomes the important document that has been submitted, with which it agrees in several areas. Like the President of the General Assembly, we believe that this is an opportune moment to strengthen the role of the Assembly and that it should not be wasted because such opportunities do not come along often.

We hope that the reform initiatives will be both bold and coherent, bold in not shirking the most difficult issues and coherent in ensuring the promotion of multilateralism in the Organization, in particular by affirming the General Assembly's ability to fully carry out the functions entrusted to it under the Charter.

Recently, at their summit held in Cusco last May, the heads of State or Government of the Rio Group countries decided to employ the full capacity of their countries to encourage the strengthening of the multilateral system based on international law and the Charter. They determined that the General Assembly plays a fundamental role in that task.

The Rio Group is determined to make its contribution to the Assembly's regaining its effective political leadership of the Organization's activities, with a real capacity for action and purpose, as all the Member States of the Organization recognized in the Millennium Declaration.

In that context, I wish to present on behalf of the Rio Group some suggestions for the revitalization of the General Assembly under the two clusters presented by the President.

First, with respect to strengthening the authority and role of the General Assembly, the United Nations Charter conferred a broad range of functions and powers on the General Assembly to deal with all questions related not only to cooperation for development but also the maintenance of international peace and security. Therefore, the Rio Group considers that the General Assembly, as the most democratic and representative organ, must have the capacity to react appropriately and to discuss the issues of the greatest urgency and importance for the international community.

To that end, it is essential to strengthen the role of the president of the General Assembly, through the coordinated supported and balanced work of the Assembly's General Committee. That means that the capacity for initiative and action should not be delegated to individuals as such but according to an official working structure based on clear rules.

It is a basic requirement that such a mechanism for management receives the necessary financial and technical support from the Secretariat, including the appointment of permanent officials who would be of great advantage because of their liaison with the Secretariat and their collective memory of the lessons learned from the work of each session.

In addition, the provisions of resolution 51/241 must be complied with; the resolution requests the General Committee of the General Assembly to prepare a document containing conclusions, suggestions and recommendations based on its experience in order to simplify and rationalize the work of the General Committee in the following session.

In order for the General Assembly to be relevant, it must be able to prioritize the main issues at a given time, giving them their due attention. That does not mean creating an agenda of first and second class items but simply identifying the interests of the international community at a given moment in order to achieve timely and concrete results.

The Rio Group also supports the proposal that the Department of Public Information create a plan of action for the better dissemination of the results of the General Assembly's work. That will require improving the quality and relevance of the recommendations and conclusions adopted.

It is necessary to comply with the various General Assembly resolutions requesting the president of the General Assembly to prepare an assessment of the debate on the meetings devoted to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, as well as to the report of the Security Council. The assessment of those debates should also consider whether a more thorough examination of those reports by the Assembly is required, including through informal consultations. The president's assessment should also contain proposals on ways to facilitate a more in-depth discussion of those items, as indicated in resolutions 48/264 and 51/241.

With respect to the second cluster, working methods of the General Assembly, the Rio Group considers that the work of simplifying the agenda must

continue, starting with the selection of the priority issues, which could be done by the president of the General Assembly and the General Committee. That does not necessarily mean eliminating items currently on the agenda but deciding which items should be treated at a specific time.

The Rio Group agrees on the need for a more coherent and balanced calendar of meetings in order to avoid concentrating most of the work of the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly into a mere three months.

The numerous formal and informal meetings, panels, presentations of reports and parallel negotiations prevent the effective and sustained treatment of agenda items. The president has reminded us that in order to strengthen the role of the General Assembly, all countries must adequately participate in its meetings. That is almost impossible, given the current workload. This situation is incomprehensible, given that the length of every General Assembly session is one calendar year — the time necessary to cover all the agenda items in a more coherent, orderly and thorough fashion.

Moreover, the Rio Group believes that each Main Committee must initiate a process of reform to optimize its work. This should include reviewing their agendas, the number of their resolutions and the distribution of their tasks over the course of the year. The consultations and coordination of Committees that deal with common items must also be improved to avoid duplication of efforts. And the work of others, such as the Fourth Committee, should be enhanced with the addition of new items, including some considered in plenary meeting.

With regard to the debate already begun in the First Committee, the Rio Group considers that that Committee must strengthen its work in the area of disarmament and international security through the effective use of the powers and functions granted to the General Assembly by the Charter. Furthermore, the Rio Group considers that the First Committee must make a greater contribution to international cooperation in the political field.

We must reflect on the existing decision-making process of the General Assembly. The rule that must guide us is to achieve the greatest common denominator and the greatest degree of cooperation from all Member States. The rule of consensus is very important, but it must not become an instrument to impede the consideration and the promotion of matters that can be vital to a substantial majority of Member States.

But the most important matter is the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. We must ensure that the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are fully implemented. Here, the Secretariat can assist us. Perhaps, at the beginning of each session, the Secretariat could submit a thorough report on resolutions that have not been implemented. It would also be worthwhile to have a Secretariat evaluation of the reasons why those resolutions have not been implemented.

If it is wrong for States not to implement the recommendations of Assembly resolutions, it is even less plausible for the Secretariat and other multilateral organs subordinate to the Organization not to carry out the provisions of resolutions that apply to them. A study of that kind would also allow us to look into the implementability of such resolutions and to adopt measures to deal with that problem. It is also important to encourage the submission of short and concise draft resolutions, based mainly on new elements.

We believe that it is very important to prepare a summary identifying, from among the numerous suggestions presented, specific substantive proposals which can garner the support of the majority of States; this will allow development of this process. The Rio Group hopes to continue participating in this important effort of revitalizing the General Assembly, which the President leads and in which we participate enthusiastically.

The Rio Group also attaches great importance to the process of strengthening the Organization, initiated by the Secretary-General. In that regard, the Rio Group expresses its satisfaction at the efforts undertaken to implement resolution 57/300, particularly with regard to budgetary reform. In that respect, the Rio Group welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal to create a shorter, more strategic medium-term plan that takes into consideration emerging trends and new challenges facing the Organization, and that does not leave out the priorities set by Member States.

Regarding the draft budget, the Rio Group considers it worthwhile for it to have a broad vision of major programmatic changes and variations and

requirements of resources that reflect those changes. It also considers it necessary to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation functions through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in order to determine the ongoing relevancy, efficiency and impact of the work of the Organization. The Group will work constructively during the intergovernmental debate in the Fifth Committee.

Finally, our countries will continue to participate actively in the debates and negotiations in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, with a view to ensuring full implementation of the objective of strengthening the Organization.

Mr. Limon (Suriname): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Suriname.

We thank the President for convening this meeting, and even more for his approach to the issue of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. In placing this matter before the Assembly at this stage of the fifty-eighth session, he has demonstrated not just commitment, but also determination to move this issue to a meaningful level within the Assembly. CARICOM welcomes his initiative and leadership and is unequivocal in its commitment to work towards meaningful advancement in this decade-long process.

Our commitment to revitalization of the General Assembly finds resonance not only in the universal call for change among the diplomatic and intellectual community, and not only in the more than 150 statements issued by our heads of State or Government or Foreign Ministers, who, from this very podium, pronounced on the need for reform and revitalization of our Organization, although that in itself is a clear mandate.

The call for reform comes from the people of the world, who increasingly sense that we, who are charged with the task of representing their needs, have failed to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing the fight for development for all peoples of the world; the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice, violence, terror and crime; and the fight against the degradation and destruction of our common home, in keeping with our commitments in the Millennium Declaration. This is a clear mandate. What prevents us from responding to this call? The time has come for us to move away from simply making rhetorical calls for reform and to finally take action.

Our first action must be to reaffirm the position that the General Assembly is the principal organ of the United Nations, for it is in the General Assembly that we find the universality of this Organization. Only the General Assembly can speak on behalf of all the peoples of the world.

CARICOM supports the proposal put forward by the President, which groups the revitalization issue into two clusters — one on enhancing the authority and the role of the General Assembly and one on improving the working methods of the General Assembly.

A number of ideas have been put forward on improving the working methods of the General Assembly. For CARICOM, such improvements should lead to more substantive debates, more interactive discussions and more implementation. We acknowledge the concerns of those who worry that reform of the working methods could be used to marginalize issues of less significance to some influential delegations. CARICOM will be vigilant in ensuring that important issues are not marginalized, but we also recognize the need for flexibility in finding common ground in fulfilling our mandate.

We believe that improving our work and ensuring that we produce relevant and meaningful outcomes represents a significant contribution to the enhancement of the authority and the role of the General Assembly. Relevant and meaningful outcomes will be translated into positive results for those we serve.

CARICOM believes that an equally important component of the revitalization process is the strengthening of the office of the President of the General Assembly. The President must have the resources to carry out the mandates entrusted to him by the Charter, as well as those that result from the deliberations of this body. He must also be given the resources necessary for him to take the message of the Assembly beyond the confines of this Hall. CARICOM looks forward to working with him on this most

important issue. We hereby express our willingness to accommodate all constructive proposals.

This conversation on reform and revitalization has continued for over a decade. We have expressed in every possible way our understanding of the need for reform — for change. Our level of activity aimed at achieving change, however, remains sluggish at best. As The Right Honourable P. J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica, put it, we must resuscitate the powers of the General Assembly and assert its role as the principal organ of the United Nations. Let us act now.

Mr. Elnaggar (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): No one in this Hall is in any doubt about the urgent need for reform. That need has been evidenced by recent events and crises in the world and the failure of the international order to carry out its responsibilities in an effective manner so as to ensure that the foundations of this international Organization are safeguarded and that it be allowed to confront the new challenges that it faces.

There are many reform initiatives relating to, inter alia, the revitalization of the General Assembly, the reform and expansion of the Security Council, the functioning and role of the Economic and Social Council, reconsideration of the role of the Trusteeship Council and the strengthening of the United Nations at the administrative and institutional levels, as well as the strengthening of the post of the Secretary-General and reducing the pressure on him and on his decisions.

In our view, reform in the various fields must be a comprehensive, integral process. Our unity of purpose must be manifested in the increase in the effectiveness and efficiency of this international Organization in all areas and the wider participation of all Member States in the decision-making process, as well as an expansion and fusion of the issues that are on the international agenda. In this respect, we believe that the process should be based on a firm foundation and that selectivity must be avoided when determining which areas require reform and in what manner. This in turn will require openness and transparency with regard to the reality of the current international situation, without unjustified pessimism or exaggerated and unfounded ambitions being manifested.

In this context, I would like to make some general points, within a framework of transparency, which could contribute to the desired goal of reform. First, we must all agree that the institutional reform of the United Nations is governed by a number of factors, some of which undermine the scope of the reform effort itself, as well as our ability to carry it out. Reform at all levels is, in principle, a political process aimed at enhancing the authority of the General Assembly and expanding the participation of Member States in elaborating the objectives of the Organization and all its resolutions, including those relating to international peace and security and support for the role of the Organization in the social, economic and political fields throughout the world, which is in our common interests.

We must therefore understand that an approach to reform that focuses only on the rationalization of some procedures — despite the importance of that — will not bring about the objective that we all seek. That is the starting point. We would like to make clear that there is an enormous difference in positions between those who want to carry out a radical reform — which is required in many important fields — and amend the Charter, whether by addition or by omission, and those who believe that the status quo should be maintained and that the role of the United Nations should be limited to purely humanitarian work. Despite the importance of such work, however, it cannot meet the aspirations of peoples or the requirements of the current international order. For example, the United Nations is still far from undertaking a leading political role in specific boiling crises or in the international economic order, which is controlled by closed cadres of the elite.

In this respect, I believe we must thoroughly examine the issue of General Assembly resolutions and its authority within the framework of the "Uniting for peace" resolution. That would be very useful in these difficult times when people have lost faith in the Organization.

If the role of the Security Council — the principal organ for maintaining international peace and security, pursuant to the Charter — has been undermined, as can be seen from many recent events, and its role limited to reforming policies that it did not draw up or set, then the question would be: is an expansion of the Council's membership sufficient to increase and enhance its effectiveness and efficiency? If the answer is in the affirmative, what would then be the scope of the expansion, and would it reflect the reality of the international political arena in an inclusive manner —

or would it be carried out with selectivity so as to reflect only part of that reality?

Secondly, there are many reform initiatives before us, some of which overlap in certain areas, and they need to be rationalized. Discussions on the same issue are currently taking place on parallel tracks. There are also other approaches that are trying to bring together separate and isolated areas of reform. In this context, I would like to note the discussions that are taking place in the General Assembly itself concerning the revitalization and enhancement of its role. Egypt also supports the initiative of the Secretary-General, spelled out in his statement on 23 September, to set up a high-level panel of eminent personalities to discuss the same issue and other matters. In this connection, a report will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. Thus the General Assembly will consider the results reached by the panel, which will examine that issue and the possibility of reaching consensus on some of the proposals in that connection.

I should like to note that discussions on the revitalization of the role and rationalization of the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees are taking place in parallel in several committees, each considering the same issue and without any unified guiding vision. I would therefore propose that the President of the General Assembly undertake a lead role in the preparation of a clear programme of action, with a specific time frame lasting through this and the next session and ending with the sixtieth, to cover all such debates. In that manner, we can use the available time with greater efficiency, avoid duplication and establish clear benchmarks during each session, including specific and practical objectives.

We also note the importance of establishing an appropriate mechanism to coordinate the work of the Panel Of Eminent Persons on United Nations Relations with Civil Society and of the General Assembly in the same area. My delegation has already proposed that the President of the General Assembly assume that vital coordinating role at this session.

Finally, with respect to promoting the role of the United Nations and following up the implementation of resolution 57/300, I should like to note the ambiguity that surrounds both the proposals submitted to develop the process of adopting the United Nations programme budget and the role of multilateral governmental frameworks in the various phases of that process. I wish to stress here the importance that Egypt, like many other developing countries, attaches to the mid-term planning of our Organization. We believe that, without such mid-term planning, it will be difficult to identify our priorities and to assess progress made in them. I wish once again to reiterate the importance of considering this matter in a comprehensive manner encompassing its various phases in order to be able to determine its shortcomings and to suggest remedies thereto.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; the associated Countries, Romania and Turkey; and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the decision to hold today's joint debate, as it brings together different strands of work on United Nations reform. Through the initiatives launched by the Secretary-General and others, as well as thanks to the personal engagement of the President of the General Assembly, there is an encouraging sense of momentum to take forward our common interest in strengthening the United Nations. The initial reactions of Member States have been very positive and they provide an indication of their commitment to moving the process forward. We have before us a common path and the European Union wants to walk it together with others.

The European Union supports the process set in motion by the Secretary-General. We want a strong and efficient United Nations system. We believe that multilateral institutions should be updated and strengthened. We are ready to contribute actively to the goal of building an international order based on effective multilateral institutions, within the fundamental framework of the United Nations Charter and our joint vision for the United Nations, as articulated by our heads of State in the Millennium Declaration. The European Union gives its support to the establishment of a high-level Panel of Eminent Personalities and we look forward to receiving recommendations from the Secretary-General in 2004, based on the work of the Panel.

The European Union further believes that reform should extend to the main United Nations policies in

order to make them more effective in the face of new and evolving global challenges. In this regard, the European Union and its member States continue to work to strengthen the coherence and consistency of their collective actions in principal United Nations organs with a view to ensuring greater respect for multilateral decisions and greater determination in their implementation. While recent improvements in the working methods of the Security Council should be further developed, there is a need for a comprehensive reform that makes it more representative, more effective and more democratic.

With respect to General Assembly revitalization, the European Union would like to express its appreciation for Mr. Hunte's leadership and commitment in steering the revitalization process. We welcome his recent non-paper as an excellent basis for making real progress during this sessions of the General Assembly. We share his views, both on substance and on process, and are heartened by the positive response they received during the first informal consultations last week. The proposals now need further elaboration with a view to taking decisions as soon as possible. We should be ambitious and at the same time focus on issues where progress can be made.

We agree with the President's proposal to hold informal consultations grouping the issues under two headings: first, enhancing the authority and role of the General Assembly, including to restore its central role in international debate and decision-making; and secondly, improving the working methods. In this framework, we are ready to work with the President in achieving concrete decisions to be adopted at this session of the General Assembly.

Enhancing the authority and role of the General Assembly is first and foremost a matter of political will. It is our shared responsibility to create the conditions in which the Assembly can fulfil its role as defined in the Charter. The General Assembly requires improvements in its working methods, but improving those working methods is not an end in itself. It will underpin our efforts to enhance the General Assembly's authority and role, as I was saying before. We would like to highlight the following priorities.

First, we must strengthen the role of the President and his Office. We would, for instance, welcome temporary secondment of additional Secretariat staff to the President's Office. We also would suggest exploring the possibility of extending a President's term or of introducing the troika system in order to draw upon experience and provide continuity.

Second, we must enhance the role of the General Committee. We welcome the initial steps that the President has taken. We could envisage a bureau function for the Committee in support of the President. One of the specific additional roles of the General Committee could be to come up with recommendations to streamline the reporting requirements.

Third, we must work in the Main Committees to strengthen their functioning and encourage each Committee to find efficient ways of organising their work. Of course, these proposals should be consistent with the wider context of revitalisation of the Assembly as a whole.

Fourth, we must develop constructive interaction with and between the bureaux of the main Committees, for example by joint bureaux meetings to identify potential areas of overlap and to review their respective programmes of work. We could also consider election of the bureaux earlier in the year, as is now the case for the President of the Assembly, to facilitate continuity and planning.

Fifth, we must communicate more effectively the decisions of the Assembly to Governments and agencies and disseminate information thereon to the broader public.

Sixth, we must look again at how to do better in implementing past General Assembly resolutions on efficient working.

Seventh, we must establish a closer link between the Assembly's agenda and the global challenges of the outside world. Debates in the plenary and in the main Committees should focus on a limited number of key issues of common interest. The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals should provide the overarching framework in that regard. Prominent outsiders could be invited to give their views on these issues. The general debate could set the stage by focusing on key themes agreed on by Member States beforehand — ideally building upon priorities indicated by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization.

The European Union also believes that some items do not require annual debate. Considering them every two or three years would make room for more in-

depth debates as well as for topical new items. We suggest that, under the guidance of the President, specific ideas to that effect could be elaborated. Debates should become more interactive, for instance by using alternative formats such as high-level dialogues and panels more often.

The General Assembly should become more action-oriented. Resolutions and decisions should be shorter and less repetitive and focus on implementation within a given time-frame. Furthermore, their implementation by Member States, the Secretariat and other parts of the United Nations system should be monitored more vigorously. The European Union seconds the suggestion that Member States proposing a draft resolution become the "focal points" for its follow-up. My Algerian colleague, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, has touched on this point, as have others, with whom we fully agree.

In the same spirit, we support efforts to strengthen the Economic and Social Council so that it can perform its role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination. A great deal has been done already, for example to improve its methods of work.

Priority should be given to implementing General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, in particular in the following areas: first, to elaborate a programme of work based on cross-cutting themes for the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; secondly, to review the methods of work of the functional commissions methods of work before 2005, in order better to pursue the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and Summits, while recognizing that there is no need for a uniform approach for all functional commissions; thirdly, to enhance the interaction with its subsidiary bodies; fourthly, to review the role of the annual spring meeting and its articulation with the biannual high-level dialogue, in relation to the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The EU welcomes the initiative of the President of the Economic and Social Council to stimulate thinking on the functioning of the Council. An essential leadership role must be played by the President and the Bureau in taking forward these ideas.

We hope that this debate will address wider issues, such as, first, the articulation of the Economic and Social Council's work with that of the General Assembly and its main committees in the economic and social sphere; and secondly, the Council's interaction with the Security Council, for example on post-conflict issues.

Turning to the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposals on the strengthening of the United Nations, the EU fully supports the General Assembly's resolution 57/300. We welcome the Secretary-General's analysis on a single-stage approach to budgetary and programming decisions, to streamline budgetary documentation and to reduce the complexity of budget procedures.

We have made clear that the European Union believes that the basic structure of the General Assembly's decision-making process is valid. The decision-making process must continue to be transparent and representative of the full membership, allowing for full consideration of budgetary and programmatic issues. Within that framework, we should be ready for a frank appraisal of how well the existing structures operate, in order to guarantee the efficient functioning of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee. The monitoring and evaluation role of the CPC could be enhanced in parallel with a more effective contribution on programmatic issues.

There are serious questions as to the usefulness of the medium-term plan and the budget outline. There are any number of ways to proceed to agreed outcomes this autumn, whether conjoining the medium-term plan with the programme budget, as some have suggested, or harmonizing the plan more effectively with a rejuvenated budget outline as part of a dual-component strategic framework. Both would better align programming and priority-setting with resource implications, which should be one of the primary objectives of this reform process.

How to move the process forward? Strengthening, enhancing and reforming the United Nations, as the only universal Organization, is necessary and urgent. We believe that, to ensure continuity of this process, there should be regular overall reviews on the progress being made in shaping the reform.

The European Union is ready to work for more concrete improvements in the efficiency of United Nations bodies, policies and processes. We are willing to cooperate with the broader United Nations membership, reaching out to other groups and Member States with the aim of delivering tangible results as of the current session of the General Assembly.

Let us not put off until tomorrow what we can do today. The present momentum will not last forever. The year 2005 will be the natural point for us to review many United Nations processes. We support a comprehensive review in 2005 of major United Nations conferences, within the overarching framework of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.